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ABSTRACT

In Washington, the existence of driver education programs is being threatened by tough economic times. To determine the opinions of teenage drivers about their traffic safety education (TSE) experience, the process of learning to drive, and the licensing of 16- and 17-year-olds, 10 percent of TSE students (N=1,070) were surveyed. Further data were collected on the use of safety belts, drinking and driving, restricted and probationary licensing, and parental involvement in the driving process. The results (response rate 62%) showed that the average age for both males and females receiving a driver's license is 16 years 5 months. The teenagers rated their traffic safety education course highly and strongly supported the continuation of the course. A vast majority of the teenagers reported passing the driver licensing examination on the first attempt. They indicated transportation to social events and family errands as the major reasons for using the automobile, and reported a higher safety belt usage rate than the statewide rate for the same group who are involved in accidents. During the first 24 months of driving 25% had been involved in an accident and 28% had received a traffic citation. Twenty-three percent had driven after drinking alcohol, but only 2 percent reported receiving an alcohol related citation. Teenagers were split in their views on probationary licensing but did not support a restricted license. (BL)

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TEENAGER VIEWS ON ISSUES RELATED TO TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION AND THE LICENSING OF TEENAGE DRIVERS

Results of a Statewide Opinion Survey on Washington Teenage Drivers

Final Report

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1984

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Nationally, much has been written about the value of high school driver education. However, the issues over driver education become more acute during tough economic times when state legislators and school administrators need to decide which programs and budgets are to be cut.

Often, decision-makers are influenced by what is written nationwide about driver education rather than looking at the driver education course as an in-state issue. Driver education courses among the 50 states are not the same, nor are they funded and supported in the same manner; moreover, the states do not have the same teacher/instructor certification standards to teach in the high school driver education program.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has supported driver education programs as a crash avoidance counter-measure. Recently, much publicity has been printed about an evaluation project funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration on a specific type of an approach to driver education. The DeKalb County Study is not an evaluation of a typical driver education program in Washington State or any other state. The federal government made a decision to put together what they believe to be the

most sophisticated program in driver education that could be developed, based upon the existing State of the Art and the research that had preceded it.

Studies conducted by the Insurance Institute on Highway Safety on state driver education programs on the east coast have been publicized in Washington State papers which have generated questions about the Washington State Traffic Safety Education Program.

The high school Traffic Safety Education Program in Washington State was enacted in 1963 by the Washington State Legislature. This Act specifically assigned the Superintendent of Public Instruction the responsibility of administering, supervising and providing leadership for the statewide Traffic Safety Education Program. In 1967, the Washington State Legislature passed legislation that raised the minimum driving age to 18, with a provision that all persons between 16 and 18 years of age may, upon successful completion of an approved Traffic Safety Education Program, apply for a Washington driver's license.

During the last two sessions of the Washington State Legislature, much attention was focused on driver education and licensing of teenage drivers. With the expectation that similar issues and related legislation would come up again,

the Traffic Safety Education (TSE) unit in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) conducted a systematic collection of public opinions on TSE programs and related issues.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine the opinions of teenage drivers about their traffic safety education experience, the process of learning to drive and the licensing of 16 and 17 year olds. Additional issues focused on teenage drivers' use of safety belts, drinking and driving, restricted and probationary license and the involvement of parents in the driving process.

The study proposed to derive data from the student course completion forms and from a survey of teenage drivers who had successfully completed a traffic safety education course and had received their driver's license during an 18 to 24 month time period. It was proposed that meaningful data could be obtained by using the following specific questions as a guide to investigating the situation:

1. Following the completion of a traffic safety education course does the age of teenagers receiving a driver's license differ when categorized by sex?

2. Do the number of days between completing a traffic safety education course and receiving a driver's license differ when categorized by sex?

Current Driving

3. Do the number of miles driven in a week vary among teenage drivers?

4. Do teenagers personally own cars?

5. How do teenagers utilize the automobile?

6. Do teenagers consistently use a safety belt when driving?

7. Do teenagers consistently use a safety belt when riding as passengers?

8. Do teenagers ask their passengers to fasten their safety belts?

Learning to Drive

9. Do teenagers receive assistance in learning to drive and, if so, how much assistance?

10. Do teenagers pass the state road test administered by the Department of Licensing?

Driving History

11. Are teenage drivers involved in motor vehicle accidents?

12. Are teenage drivers receiving traffic citations?

13. Are teenagers driving after drinking alcohol?

14. Are teenagers responsible for alcohol related traffic accidents?

Traffic Safety Issues

15. How do teenage drivers feel about a required course of instruction prior to licensing?

16. How do teenage drivers feel about being issued a probationary or restricted license?

17. How do teenage drivers feel about the new DWI law?

18. How do teenage drivers feel about alcohol education programs?

19. How do teenage drivers feel about their traffic safety education experiences?

20. How do teenage drivers rate their driving ability?

CHAPTER II

THE METHODS OF PROCEDURE

The population from which the sample for this study was selected consisted of those high school traffic safety education students who received a Washington State driver's license during a three-month period from April 15, 1982 through July 15, 1982. During this time frame 11,111 traffic safety education students received a Washington State driver's license.

The 57 Washington State Department of Licensing examining stations collected the traffic safety education course completion forms upon issuing a driver's license. The course completion forms were delivered to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction on a weekly basis and a log was maintained as to the quantity of course completion forms received from each of the licensing examining stations. Table 1 shows the number of forms by station.

Each of the 11,111 course completion forms was inspected individually and prepared for data entry. The forms were checked for: legibility of name, address, date of birth, sex, high school, high school district, the course completion date, the licensure date and the student driver license number. Seven thousand of the course completion

Table 1

TALLIES OF STUDENT TSE COURSE COMPLETION FORMS

RECEIVED FROM THE STATE'S 57 DRIVER LICENSING EXAMINING STATIONS

During the Period from 4/15/82 to 7/15/82

DRIVER LICENSING EXAM. STATIONS	TOTALS	DRIVER LICENSING EXAM. STATIONS	TOTALS
Aberdeen	142	Olympia	375
Anacortes	55	Oroville	19
Auburn	363	Othello	37
Bellevue	326	Port Angeles	108
Bellingham	234	Port Townsend	37
Bremerton	287	Poulsbo	141
Centralia	179	Pullman	115
Chelan	67	Puyallup	370
Clarkston	65	Raymond	98
Colfax	54	Renton	361
Colville	102	Republic	16
Coulee Dam	26	Ritzville	40
Ellensburg	88	Seattle - Burien	352
Ephrata	85	Seattle - Central	62
Everett	330	Seattle - Greenwood	225
Federal Way	222	Seattle - North Seattle	387
Forks	34	Shelton	75
Goldendale	27	Spokane - East Spokane	399
Kennewick	395	Spokane - North Spokane	594
Kirkland	414	Sunnyside	156
Longview	263	Tacoma - North Tacoma	461
Lynnwood	336	Tacoma - South Tacoma	355
Midway (Kent)	167	Vancouver - Hazel Dell	337
Morton	61	Vancouver	273
Moses Lake	74	Walla Walla	109
Mt. Vernon	315	Wenatchee	152
North Bend	213	White Salmon	61
Oak Harbor	91	Yakima	330
Okanogan	51		
		GRAND TOTAL	11,111

forms required the addition or correction of zip code information for the student's address, and the student driver license numbers using the Department of Licensing code. Figure 1 shows the Department of Licensing code to determine a person's license number.

Each of the 11,111 course completion forms was reviewed for discrepancies, as well as preparation of the data for the computer operator. This required circling all required data in red and transposing data into alpha or numerical codes.

Each course completion form was also given a series of code numbers identifying county, educational service district, school district and high school building number. This information was derived individually from an agency computer printout and handwritten on a strip of self-adhesive paper (½" x 2¼") which was placed on the upper right hand corner of each course completion form. Figure 2 shows a course completion form with code numbers identifying county, educational service district, school district, and high school building number.

Of the 11,111 course completion forms, a total of 351 forms was discarded due to illegible writing or incomplete data that were not available from the school district or the Department of Licensing. A total of 10,760 usable forms was available for the project and survey.

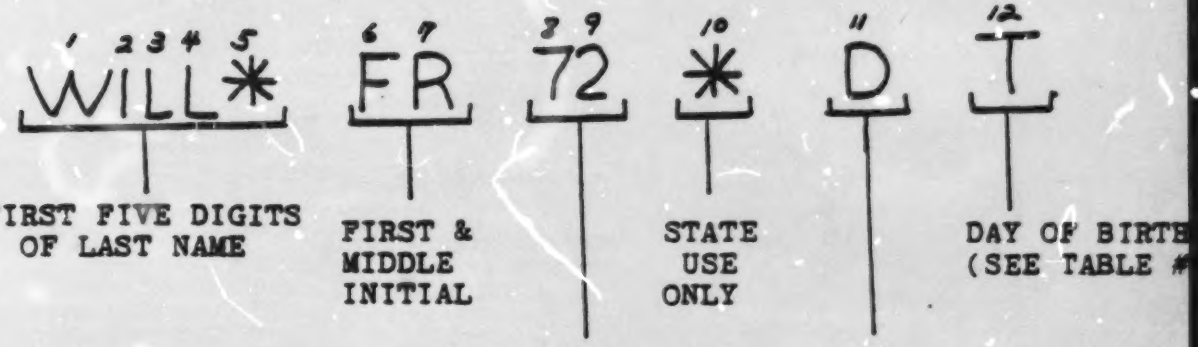
Figure 1

WASHINGTON STATE DRIVER'S LICENSE "12" DIGIT CODE

EXAMPLE:

LICENSEE: Fred R. Will

DATE OF BIRTH: Mar. 30, 1928



FIRST FIVE DIGITS OF LAST NAME

FIRST & MIDDLE INITIAL

YEAR OF BIRTH FROM 100 EQUALS THIS NUMBER (SEE TABLE #1)

STATE USE ONLY

MONTH OF BIRTH (SEE TABLE #2)

DAY OF BIRTH (SEE TABLE #

TABLE #1 100 - 28 = 72

TABLE #2

MONTH OF BIRTH	
JAN	B
FEB	C
MAR	D
APR	J
MAY	K
JUN	L
JUL	M
AUG	N
SEP	O
OCT	P
NOV	Q
DEC	R

TABLE #3

DAY OF BIRTH					
1	A	12	K	22	2
2	B	13	L	23	3
3	C	14	M	24	4
4	D	15	N	25	5
5	E	16	W	26	6
6	F	17	P	27	7
7	G	18	Q	28	8
8	H	19	R	29	9
9	Z	20	Ø	30	T
10	S	21	1	31	U
11	J				

Figure 2

COURSE COMPLETION FORM

— 189 15201 2974

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE

SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

CERTIFICATE NO. 724051

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

DRIVERS LIC. NO. _ _ - _ _ - _ _ - _ _ _ _

NAME LAST _____ FIRST _____ INITIAL _____

ADDRESS STREET _____ CITY _____

COUNTY _____ , WASHINGTON ZIP _____

DATE OF BIRTH MO. _____ DAY _____ YEAR _____ SEX MALE _____ FEMALE _____

SAMPLE

HAS SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED A TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION COURSE AS APPROVED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

THE COURSE WAS PROVIDED BY:

HIGH SCHOOL NAME _____

SCHOOL DISTRICT NAME _____

COURSE COMPLETED MO. ____ DAY ____ YEAR ____

SIGNED _____
HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OR TSE COORDINATOR

SCHOOL DISTRICT FILE COPY

FORM M785

As the 10,760 usable forms became ready for entry into the computer, they were re-stored in their respective 57 driver licensing station files.

Although the same population was used for a previous study in 1982 (Parental Views on Issues Related to Traffic Safety Education and the Licensing of Teenage Drivers, Plato and Bloomfield, 1983.), a new sample was randomly drawn. Using a random table of numbers a ten percent sample was selected. The number seven was drawn and every seventh form, out of every group of ten forms, was picked. A total of 1,070 course completion forms was selected from the 10,760 usable forms.

The computer operator then entered the following information from each of the 1,070 forms into the agency computer: name (first, middle initial and last), address and zip code, date of birth, sex, date of course completion, date of licensure, course completion certificate number, driver's license number and a 12-digit code number representing educational service district, county, school district, and high school building.

A tally was taken on the number of course completion forms received from the Department of Licensing examining stations in eastern and western Washington. The two tallies

were compared with the total student populations in eastern and western parts of the State of Washington. Table 2 shows the numbers of student course completion forms were in direct proportion with the total student populations. This assured us an even geographical population representation in the sample.

A questionnaire was developed to survey the 1,070 teenage drivers. A cover letter over the Superintendent's signature was devised to accompany the survey questionnaire. In addition, a reminder post card was developed and arrangements were made for printing postage-free reply envelopes. A warrant to cover the postage and handling fee through the U.S. Post Office was also procured.

Upon completion of the data entry into the computer, two sets of computer print-outs on the 1,070 course completion forms were run. One set was in alphabetical order by last name and the other set was in numerical order by course completion certificate number, student's name and address. This listing was most useful in the sending and receiving process of the student survey. The alpha listing included the student's name, address, driver's license and certificate numbers.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENT
COURSE COMPLETION FORMS

TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENT COURSE COMPLETION FORMS COLLECTED:	11,111
NUMBER OF USABLE FORMS:	10,750
10% RANDOM SAMPLE:	1,070

	FROM WESTERN PARTS		FROM EASTERN PARTS	
TOTAL COLLECTED:	8,049 (72%)	+	3,062 (28%)	= 11,111
10% SAMPLE SENT:	789 (74%)	+	281 (26%)	= 1,070
TOTAL STUDENT POPULATIONS INCLUSIVE OF ALL GRADES	560,000 (74%)	+	200,000 (26%)	= 760,000

According to 1981-82 ESD Enrollment Reports

RECEIVED: 11/15/83 CUTOFF DATE	492 respondents (62.3% of 789)	+	178 respondents (63.3% of 281)	= 670 (62.6% of 1,070)

In addition to the print-outs, two sets of "Avery" self-adhesive address labels and two sets of self-adhesive course completion certificate number labels were made available by the computer.

During the dates of 6th through 9th of September 1983, the questionnaire was mailed out to 1,070 teenage drivers with a return date of September 26, 1983. A system for identifying which questionnaires were or were not returned was established.

One set of the labels containing the course completion certificate numbers was placed on the upper right hand corner of each of the 1,070 survey questionnaires. The other sat of address labels was placed on agency envelopes addressed to the name of the student. The envelope, when it was ready for mailing, contained the questionnaire, a cover letter signed by the State Superintendent, and a business reply envelope with the Superintendent of Public Instruction's return address. Prior to each questionnaire being placed in the envelope, it was individually hand checked to ensure that the certificate number on the questionnaire matched the certificate number on the course completion form and was being sent to the correct address, utilizing the numerical printout.

The survey returns began arriving the following week. The responding teenage drivers were identified utilizing the certificate number on the questionnaire as a reference and were indicated on the numerical printout.

At the end of four weeks 45 percent of the questionnaires (486) had been received. This left 584 student questionnaires for follow-up. A reminder card was mailed to each of the 584 teenage drivers. This was accomplished by first identifying the 584 non-responding teenagers on the numerical printout by certificate numbers. Utilizing the second set of "Avery" self-adhesive labels, the 584 certificate labels were placed on the questionnaire and the corresponding address labels placed on agency envelopes. To ensure the questionnaire would be sent to the correct address, each questionnaire was individually hand checked, utilizing the numerical printout, to make sure the certificate number on the questionnaire matched the certificate number of the course completion form. Each of the questionnaires was accompanied by a reminder post card rather than a second copy of the initial letter.

The date of November 15, 1983 was established as the cutoff date to accept the survey returns. Returns received after that date were not used in the survey analysis.

During this time period, 31 of the questionnaires were returned to us marked, "moved - left no forwarding address" or "undeliverable as marked." Each of these returns was followed up with a telephone call to the Department of Licensing. Utilizing the driver's license number, the Department of Licensing computer was able to retrieve the most current address. Through this process, only seven addresses remained "undeliverable" out of our sample of 1,070 mailings. All address corrections were then updated on our agency computer.

On November 15, 1983, a return of 62.6 percent (670 out of 1,070) responses had been received. Nine of the returns could not be used as the certificate number labels from the questionnaire had been removed or altered.

The 661 valid responses represented a 61.7 percent return. Each return was reviewed individually to ensure the responses were legible for the computer operator and for additional comments. All 661 questionnaires with the data from the 24 questions were entered into the agency computer. On December 1, 1983, a computer printout became available tallying the results of the survey.

CHAPTER III

THE FINDINGS

The previous units contained the problem, the procedures, and methodology used in the study. This unit presents the findings of the investigation.

It was the purpose of this study to assess how teenage drivers felt about the learning to drive process, their traffic safety education course experiences, the licensing of 16 and 17 year olds. Additional data collection focused on safety belts, drinking and driving, use of the automobile, the importance of driving and other related traffic safety issues. Information was obtained through a statewide survey from 661 respondents who had successfully completed a traffic safety education course and received a driver's license. Additional data was derived from 1,070 student course completion forms. Data from the survey and the student course completion forms were entered into the agency computer for computation.

Data Derived From the Student Course Completion Form

The population for the study was 10,760 teenage drivers who completed a traffic safety education course and received a driver's license during a three-month period from April

15, 1982 through July 15, 1982. A 10% sample was randomly selected from the population. This represented a sample size of 1,070 teenage drivers. There were 546 male respondents which represented 51.03 percent of the sample, while 524 female respondents represented 48.97 percent of the sample population. The randomly selected students had received their traffic safety education program from 181 public and private school districts and 6 commercial schools. Table 3 shows the student percentage breakdown by Educational Service District areas in Washington State.

TABLE 3

STUDENT POPULATION BY ESD'S

ESD	NUMBER OF PEOPLE		PERCENTAGE
101	123	=	11.50
105	52	=	4.86
112	96	=	8.97
113	76	=	7.10
114	58	=	5.42
121	424	=	39.63
123	63	=	5.89
171	43	=	4.02
189	135	=	12.62
TOTAL ACROSS ALL ESD's	1,070	=	100.00

Student Age Characteristics

To determine the age at which students received their driver's license following the completion of a traffic safety education course, the following question was asked:

> Following the completion of a Traffic Safety Education course, does the age of teenagers receiving a driver's license differ when categorized by sex?

Table 4 shows the breakdown of the 1,070 teenagers in relation to age and sex as to when they received their driver's license. The age range for the male teenagers was a low of 16 years to a high of 18 years and 7 months, as compared to the female teenagers who had a low of 16 years to a high of 20 years and 2 months.

The average age for both female and male teenagers when they received their driver's license is 16 years and 5¼ months. The most frequent age is 16 years for both sexes.

TABLE 4

TEENAGE LICENSING AGE

	FEMALE 524 TEENAGERS	MALE 546 TEENAGERS	TOTAL 1,070 TEENAGERS
MEAN	16 yrs. 6 mo.	16 yrs. 5¼ mo.	16 yrs. 5¼ mo.
MEDIAN	16 yrs. 3 mo.	16 yrs. 3 mo.	16 yrs. 3 mo.
MODE	16 yrs.	16 yrs.	16 yrs.
RANGE	16-20 yrs. 2 mo.	16-18 yrs. 7 mo.	16-20 yrs. 2 mo.

Number of Days Between Completing A Traffic Safety Education Course and Receiving A Driver's License

To determine the number of days from the time the teenagers completed a course to the time they received their driver's license, the following question was programmed into the computer:

> Do the number of days between completing a traffic safety education course and receiving a driver's license differ when categorized by sex?

Table 5 shows the breakdown of the 1,070 teenagers in relation to age and sex and when they received their driver's license. The average length of time between completing a Traffic Safety Education course and receiving a driver's license, for both male and female teenagers, was four months and three days. The most frequent time span for both male and female was one day following the completion of a course.

TABLE 5

TIME SPAN BETWEEN TSE COURSE AND LICENSING

	FEMALE 524 TEENAGERS	MALE 546 TEENAGERS	TOTAL 1,070 TEENAGERS
MEAN	5 mo. 8 days	3 mo. 2 days	4 mo. 3 days
MEDIAN	29 days	35 days	32 days
MODE	1 day	1 day	1 day

Teenage Driver Opinion Survey

A survey was sent to 1,070 teenage drivers, who had completed a traffic safety education course and received their driver's license, in order to assess their opinions about the Washington State Traffic Safety Education Program, the learning to drive process, and the licensing of 16 and 17 year olds. Additional issues focused on teenage drivers' use of safety belts, drinking and driving, restricted and probationary licenses and the involvement of parents in the driving process.

A total of 661 valid survey responses were returned (62%) at the end of the cutoff date. Percentages for each indicated answer were computed to illustrate the findings. Question 23 lists the most common reasons for needing to drive expressed by teenagers. Question 24 lists other comments students shared pertaining to the subject of the survey.

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY

1983

CURRENT DRIVING

1. Please estimate the number of miles you drive in a week. (check one)

14% less than 25 (very low)
19% 26-50 (low)
29% 51-75 (moderate)
18% 76-100 (high)
20% 100 or more (very high)

2. Do you personally own a car?

38% Yes
62% No

3. Do you presently drive a car:

to school?	68% Yes	32% No
to work?	59% Yes	41% No
during your work?	14% Yes	86% No
to social events?	90% Yes	10% No
to transport family members?	71% Yes	29% No
to do family errands?	86% Yes	14% No

4. Do you consistently use a safety belt when driving?

37% Yes 63% No

5. Do you consistently use a safety belt when riding as a passenger?

29% Yes 71% No

6. When driving do you ask your passengers to fasten their safety belts?

26% Yes 74% No

LEARNING TO DRIVE

7. Who helped you learn to drive? (Not including your Traffic Safety Education teacher)

Father only	27%
Mother only	16%
Both parents	50%
Other (explain)	7%

8. Please estimate the number of hours of help provided (check one)

30% 1-10 hours 22% 11-20 hours 14% 21-30 hours
8% 31-40 hours 24% 41 or more hours
2% no assistance

9. How many times did you take the road test before passing it?

86% once 13% twice 1% three or more times

DRIVING HISTORY

10. Since licensing, have you been involved in a motor vehicle accident?

    25% Yes 75% No

11. Since licensing, have you received a traffic citation (not including parking tickets)?

    28% Yes 72% No

12. In the past year have you driven after drinking alcohol?

    23% Yes 77% No

13. Since licensing, have you received an alcohol-related traffic citation?

    2% Yes 98% No

14. Since licensing, have you been responsible for an alcohol-related traffic accident?

    1% Yes 99% No

Part II - Directions: The following section asks you to indicate your opinion on a number of matters. Please check the blank that best describes your feelings.

15. A traffic safety course should continue to be required for all 16 and 17 year olds before they can obtain a driver's license.

96% Yes 4% No

16. A traffic safety education course should be required for <u>all</u> new drivers, regardless of age.

84% Yes 16% No

17. All 16 and 17 year olds should be given a probationary driver's license which may be taken away if they do not perform as safe and law abiding drivers.

53% Yes 47% No

18. Persons under 18 years of age should receive a restricted license which would <u>NOT</u> allow them to drive between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m. (except on a job-related waiver).

14% Yes 86% No

19. The new state law which takes away the license of a teenager until age 19 upon conviction of DWI will reduce teenage drinking and driving.

61% Yes 39% No

20. Alcohol education programs can be effective in reducing teenage drinking and driving.

66% Yes 34% No

21. If I were to rate my overall driving ability after one year of driving, I would give myself a: (check one)

25% "A" (Top Quality Driver)
66% "B" (Good Driver)
9% "C" (I'm OK)
0% "D" (Poor Driver. Still need more practice!)
0% "E" (Lousy Driver. Shouldn't be on the road!)

22. If I were to grade the traffic safety education program I received it would get a: (check one)

15% "A" (Top quality. Couldn't be better!)
57% "B" (Good program. Learned plenty.)
21% "C" (OK. Got me by!)
4% "D" (Poor. Could have done as well without it!)
3% "E" (BAD. Learned more outside of the course!)

23. In your own words, please state (briefly) why driving as a teenager is important to you.

It gives me responsibility and freedom.

Allows me to transport parents to hospital and back for medical treatment.

Drive to and from work.

It gives me independence.

Makes me feel grown up.

Allows freedom to do things.

Drive to work from school.

It gives me mobility.

Allows me to participate in after school activities.

Saves my parents from transporting me.

Do not have to depend on my parents to drive me.

Allows me to help out with the family business.

I am married and have family responsibilities.

My parents work and I need to drive to school, work, church.

24. Do you have other comments you wish to share with us pertaining to the subject of this survey?

It is important to educate young drivers about alcohol. I believe it would decrease the incidence of drunk driving.

Traffic Safety Education is a beneficial program, I learned a lot.

It is nice to know adults are interested in teen-age opinions.

Do not extend the driving age. Don't punish all for the accidents of a few.

There should be tougher standards for getting first license.

No one should pass the TSE course with less than a "B" grade.

Include "how to fix your car" (fix flat tire and simple things) in the TSE course.

The more things are forbidden the more people want to try them unless there is a severe punishment.

Many teenagers believe "it couldn't happen to me" and refuse to slow down even when other teenagers ask them to.

Appreciation expressed for the survey--it caused me to think.

Increasingly friends are not driving after drinking. Thinks commercials on drunk driving are effective.

Every applicant for a driver's license, regardless of age, should be required to take a driving course.

Anyone receiving a DWI should have their license revoked until he/she seeks help.

Safety belt usage should be mandatory.

Student fees are too high.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF TEENAGE DRIVER SURVEY

Miles Driven

Question 1 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to estimate the number of miles they drive in a week. The results from this question reveal that Washington State teenage drivers vary greatly in the amount of driving they do each week. The survey indicated 29 percent estimated 51-75 miles per week. This percent was followed by 20 percent estimated 100 miles or more per week. The remaining percentages and estimation of miles driven per week are as follows:

19 percent estimated 26-50 miles,

18 percent estimated 76-100 miles,

14 percent estimated 25 miles or less driven each week.

Car Ownership

Question 2 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to reveal if they own a car. In the State of Washington a person must be 18 years of age in order to purchase a

vehicle. It was assumed that someone else purchased the vehicle for those drivers under age 18 who answered affirmative. The purpose of the question was to reveal accessibility to an automobile by the teenager.

The survey indicated 38 percent of the teenagers do own a vehicle or have a vehicle identified as theirs, while 62 percent indicated they do not own a vehicle.

Vehicle Usage

Question 3 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to identify the ways they use the vehicle. In an attempt to categorize the factors, teenagers were asked to indicate all of the reasons that prompted their decision to drive. Six standardized responses were provided. Leading the list was "transportation to social events." Ninety percent of the respondents indicated this as a reason for driving. Eighty-six percent indicated "family errands." "Transporting family members" was the third ranked factor with 71 percent of the teenagers responding. Sixty-eight percent of the teenage drivers indicated using the car to go to school. Using the car to go to work was cited by 59 percent of the respondents. Only 14 percent of the teenagers use an automobile during the time they work.

Safety Belt Usage

Questions 4, 5 and 6 of the survey asked the teenage driver to reveal safety belt usage. In question 4, 37 percent of the teenage drivers indicated they consistently use a safety belt when driving. This was a higher percentage than the statewide usage for this age group who are involved in investigated collisions (11.4%) according to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission, July 1983. Questions 5 and 6 revealed that 29 percent of the teenage drivers use a safety belt when riding as a passenger and only 26 percent ask their passengers to fasten their safety belts.

Parent Involvement

Question 7 of the survey asked the respondents to identify persons who helped them learn to drive, excluding the traffic safety education teacher. Ninety-three percent of the students indicated they received help from either one or both of their parents in learning to drive. More specifically, 50 percent of the students received help from both parents, 27 percent from father only and 16 percent from mother only, while 7 percent said "other." In analyzing the 7 percent who indicated "other," 2 percent indicated no assistance other than from the traffic safety education teacher, 2 percent indicated a "friend" and 3 percent indicated "relative," i.e., brother, sister, grandparent, cousin.

The largest percentage (30%) of the respondents indicated 1-10 hours of assistance; 24 percent 41 or more hours of assistance; 22 percent of the respondents said they received help 11-20 hours; the 21-30 hour range was the time listed by 14 percent of the respondents; eight percent of the teenagers said they received 31-40 hours of assistance. Only 2 percent indicated no help at all. Therefore, 98 percent of the students received assistance outside the traffic safety education course while learning to drive.

Department of Licensing Examination

Question 9 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to identify the number of times they took the road test administered by the Department of Licensing. Eighty-six percent indicated once, followed by 13 percent twice, and 1 percent three or more times.

Driving History

Questions 10 and 11 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to share their past driving experiences. The teenage drivers indicated that 25 percent have been involved in an accident and 28 percent have received a traffic citation since receiving their driver's license.

Questions 12, 13 and 14 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to share their drinking and driving experiences. The respondents indicated 23 percent had driven after drinking alcohol, 2 percent had received an alcohol-related traffic citation, 1 percent indicated they had been responsible for an alcohol-related traffic accident.

Opinions on Traffic Safety Education Issues

Questions 15 and 16 of the survey asked the teenage drivers their opinions about requiring a traffic safety education course prior to obtaining a driver's license. The teenage respondents felt strongly about the traffic safety education course. Ninety-six percent of the respondents were in favor of requiring all 16 and 17 year olds to take a traffic safety education course prior to licensing. Eighty-four percent of the respondents were in favor of requiring a course for all new drivers regardless of age.

Questions 17 and 18 of the survey asked the teenage drivers their opinions about issuing a probationary driver's license to 16 and 17 year olds or a restricted license to 16 and 17 year olds which would prohibit them from driving between midnight and 5:00 a.m. When the teenage drivers were asked how they felt about a restricted license 86 percent opposed the midnight to 5:00 a.m. restriction.

However, when asked about a probationary driver's license for 16 and 17 year olds that could be taken away for poor road performance or violations, only 53 percent were in favor of the concept.

Questions 19 and 20 of the survey asked teenage drivers their opinion about the new DWI law which would take away the license of a teenager until age 19 upon conviction of a DWI and whether alcohol education programs are effective in reducing teenage drinking and driving. Sixty-one percent of the respondents believed that the new DWI law would reduce teenage drinking and driving. However, the teenage respondents believed even stronger about alcohol education programs. Sixty-six percent believed that alcohol education programs can be effective in reducing teenage drinking and driving.

Questions 21 and 22 of the survey asked the teenage drivers to rate their overall driving ability after one year of driving and to rate the traffic safety education program they received. Teenagers rated their overall driving ability high; 25 percent "A" (top quality), 66 percent "B" (good driver); 9 percent "C" (I'm OK). No one rated their overall driving ability "D" (poor driver. Still need more practice) or "E" (Lousy driver. Shouldn't be on the road).

Teenagers rated their traffic safety education program less than their driving ability but still fairly high. Fifteen percent said "A" (Top quality. Couldn't be better), 57 percent "B" (Good program. Learned plenty), 21 percent "C" (OK! Got me by!), 4 percent "D" (Poor. Could have done as well without it!), and 3 percent "E" (Bad! Learned more outside of the course!).

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Teenagers look forward to the time when they can drive on the highways. Obtaining a license to drive provides them freedom and the mobility to work, to participate in after school athletics and activities. It allows them to help the family in running errands, transporting family members and gives a sense of independence since they do not have to depend on parents to chauffeur them around.

The average age for both males and females receiving a driver's license is 16 years 5 months with the most frequent age being 16 years. The average time span between completing a traffic safety education course and receiving a license for both males and females was 4 months and 3 days.

Looking back at their traffic safety education course the teenagers rated their experiences high and strongly supported the continuation of a traffic safety education course for 16 and 17 year old students prior to receiving a driver's license. Teenagers do receive assistance outside the driver education course and usually from both parents in the family. A vast majority of the teenagers reported passing the driver licensing examination on the first attempt.

Teenage drivers vary greatly on the number of reported miles driven each week but indicated transportation to social events and family errands as the major reasons for using the automobile.

Teenagers reported that during the first 24 months of driving 25 percent had been involved in an accident and 28 percent had received a traffic citation. They also indicated 23 percent had driven after drinking alcohol but only 2 percent reported receiving an alcohol related citation.

CONCLUSIONS

The following are conclusions based upon the findings of the survey.

1. Teenage drivers support the continuation of a traffic safety education course for 16 and 17 year old students.

2. Teenage drivers support the idea of requiring a traffic safety education course for all ages, prior to receiving a driver's license.

3. Teenagers do receive some assistance outside the traffic safety education course and usually from both parents.

4. Teenage drivers rated high their traffic safety education course experiences.

5. A vast majority of teenage drivers reported passing the driver licensing examination on the first attempt.

6. Teenage drivers reported having a higher safety belt usage rate than the statewide usage rate for the same group who are involved in accidents.

7. Teenage drivers <u>are split</u> on the idea of issuing a probationary license to 16 and 17 year old drivers.

8. Teenage drivers <u>do not support</u> the idea of a restricted license which would not allow teenagers to drive from midnight to 5:00 a.m.

9. Teenage drivers believe that the new DWI law will reduce teenage drinking and driving.

10. Teenage drivers believe that alcohol education programs can be effective in reducing teenage drinking and driving.

SPI **Superintendent of Public Instruction**
DR. FRANK B. BROUILLET · OLD CAPITOL BLDG., OLYMPIA, WASH. 98504

Please return the completed survey
by September 26, 1983 in the
enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Dear Student:

I need your help. The Traffic Safety Education Unit of my office is committed to providing quality driver education programs for teenagers. Because you are a teenager who has recently been licensed to drive, I believe you could provide valuable information to my office on issues related to teenage drivers. For this reason, I am inviting you to participate in a statewide survey.

The purpose of the survey is to find out how you feel about traffic safety education programs, the learning to drive process, and the licensing of 16 and 17 year olds. Since only 1,100 students in all parts of the state have been randomly selected to participate, it is very important that you respond. I am asking you to take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to the traffic safety unit in the postage-paid envelope provided.

Your response will be merged with those of other students, and the specific answers you give will never be identified as yours. If you would like more information about the survey, please contact Dr. Gary Bloomfield, the Traffic Safety Education Program Manager, at (206) 753-6736.

Sincerely,

Frank B. Brouillet

Frank B. Brouillet
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

FBB:cb

Enclosures

APPENDIX B

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY - 1983

Just a reminder that we have not received your completed student survey form which was mailed to you several weeks ago. If you have recently mailed it, please ignore this reminder. If, however, you have not sent it in, please complete the enclosed form and mail it back in the envelope provided.

Sincerely,

Gary J. Bloomfield, Ph.D.
Program Manager
Traffic Safety Education
Supt. of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building FG-11
Olympia, Washington 98504

APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
Traffic Safety Education
Old Capitol Bldg., FG-11, Olympia, WA 98504

SPI
State Of Washington
Superintendent Of Public Instruction

TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION STUDENT SURVEY – 1983

PART I — Directions: Please read each item carefully and check the blank or fill in the ranking that best describes your experiences as you learned to drive and after one year of driving.

CURRENT DRIVING

1. Please estimate the number of miles you drive in a week. (check one)
   _____ less than 25 (very low)
   _____ 26-50 (low)
   _____ 51-75 (moderate)
   _____ 76-100 (high)
   _____ 100 or more (very high)

2. Do you personally own a car? _____ Yes _____ No

3. Do you presently drive a car:

to school?	_____ Yes	_____ No
to work?	_____ Yes	_____ No
during your work?	_____ Yes	_____ No
to social events?	_____ Yes	_____ No
to transport family members?	_____ Yes	_____ No
to do family errands?	_____ Yes	_____ No

   for other reasons, (explain _____)

4. Do you consistently use a safety belt when driving?
   _____ Yes _____ No

5. Do you consistently use a safety belt when riding as a passenger?
   _____ Yes _____ No

6. When driving do you ask your passengers to fasten their safety belts?
   _____ Yes _____ No

LEARNING TO DRIVE

7. Who helped you learn to drive? (Not including your Traffic Safety Education Course)

Father	_____ Yes	_____ No
Mother	_____ Yes	_____ No
Guardian	_____ Yes	_____ No

   Other (Explain _____)

8. Please estimate the number of hours of help provided. (check one)
   _____ 1-10 hours _____ 11-20 hours _____ 21-30 hours
   _____ 31-40 hours _____ 41 or more hours _____ no assistance

9. How many times did you take the road test before passing it?
   _____ once _____ twice _____ three or more times

DRIVING HISTORY:

10. Since licensing, have you been involved in a motor vehicle accident?
    _____ Yes _____ No

11. Since licensing, have you received a traffic citation (not including parking tickets)?
    _____ Yes _____ No

12. In the past year have you driven after drinking alcohol?
    _____ Yes _____ No

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13. Since licensing, have you received an alcohol-related traffic citation?
_____ Yes _____ No

14. Since licensing, have you been responsible for an alcohol-related traffic accident?
_____ Yes _____ No

PART II — Directions: The following section asks you to indicate your opinion on a number of matters. Please check the blank that best describes your feelings.

15. A traffic safety course should continue to be required for all 16 and 17 year olds before they can obtain a driver's license.
_____ Yes _____ No

16. A traffic safety education course should be required for <u>all</u> new drivers, regardless of age.
_____ Yes _____ No

17. All 16 and 17 year olds should be given a probationary driver's license which may be taken away if they do not perform as safe and law abiding drivers.
_____ Yes _____ No

18. Persons under 18 years of age should receive a restricted license which would <u>NOT</u> allow them to drive between the hours of midnight and 5:00 a.m. (Except on job-related waiver.)
_____ Yes _____ No

19. The new state law which takes away the license of a teenager until age 19 upon conviction of DWI will reduce teenage drinking and driving.
_____ Yes _____ No

20. Alcohol education programs can be effective in reducing teenage drinking and driving.
_____ Yes _____ No

21. If I were to rate my overall driving ability after one year of driving, I would give myself an: (check one)
_____ "A" (Top Quality Driver)
_____ "B" (Good Driver)
_____ "C" (I'm OK)
_____ "D" (Poor Driver. Still need more practice!)
_____ "E" (Lousy Driver. Shouldn't be on the road!)

22. If I were to grade the traffic safety education program I received, it would get an: (check one)
_____ "A" (Top quality. Couldn't be better!)
_____ "B" (Good program. Learned plenty.)
_____ "C" (OK! Got me by!)
_____ "D" (Poor. Could have done as well without it!)
_____ "E" (BAD! Learned more outside of the course!)

23. In your own words, please state (briefly) why driving as a teenager is important to you.

_____
_____
_____

24. Do you have other comments you wish to share with us related to the subject of this survey?

_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS SURVEY
PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED SURVEY TO TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION UNIT
SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OLD CAPITOL BUILDING, PG-11, OLYMPIA, WA 98504

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SS-217 (8/83) A POSTAGE PAID, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPE HAS BEEN PROVIDED 1047QB.00

DR. FRANK B. BROUILLET
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Old Capitol Building. FG-11. Olympia. WA 98504